

68/70 Church Walk

Design and Access Statement

December 2022

1.0 Introduction and Background

This Design and Access Statement is provided to support the Planning Application at 68/70 Church Walk, Burgess Hill, RH15 9AS for the redevelopment of the existing building 2 storey building to create a 4 storey building with 10No. flats over three floors above the exiting retail use at Ground floor.

2.0 Existing Site

Church Walk is a pedestrianised market area in the town centre of Burgess Hill, with commercial units along both sides creating an active street scene. The height of buildings varies from 2 to 4 storeys with a mix of residential and commercial uses above ground floor level. Buildings are of masonry/brick construction with both flat and pitched roofs.

The application building is in reasonable condition but stands out in Church Walk as having the least 'active frontage' particularly at first floor level which consists of a blank brick wall with no openings or glazing and a flat parapet upstand.



Left: View of application site from Church Walk

The rear of the property is accessed via Crescent Way, this serves as the rear access for all commercial units facing onto Church Walk allowing for rear building access, refuse storage and for some sites parking.



Left: View of application site from Crescent Way



Above: Extract of site plan

The boundaries of the site are dictated to the South-West by Church Walk pedestrianised area, to the sides it is bounded by adjacent buildings with commercial ground floors and residential upper storeys and to the rear is a walled refuse area on the boundary with Crescent Way.

The existing height of the application site is lower than both neighbouring properties, the most relevant of which being the approved scheme for 68 Church Walk which extends the existing building upwards by two storeys to create 8 flats with commercial use below.

3.0 Relevant Planning History and Context

The following planning applications are associated with the application site

- One illuminated fascia sign. Ref. No: BH/225/89 | Status: Permission
- New shopfront Ref. No: 07/03084/FUL | Status: Permission
- Fascia sign. Ref. No: BH/085/76 | Status: Refused
- Double sided illuminated box sign. Ref. No: BH/305/75 | Status: Permission
- Illuminated fascia sign. Ref. No: BH/306/75 | Status: Permission
- Illuminated fascia signs (two). Ref. No: BH/307/75 | Status: Refused
- Alterations to shopfront. Ref. No: BH/310/75 | Status: Permission

Relevant applications in the immediate surroundings of the site are noted below:

- Reference DM/21/3503 Thu 21 Oct 2021 - 66 Church Walk Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9AU - Two-storey upwards extension to provide 6 x one-bedroom flats and 2 x two bedroom flats. Status Approved

This application demonstrates the planning authority have previously supported the principle of upwards extension to create residential flats over commercial ground floor use on Church Walk.

- Reference DM/21/3173 Wed 01 Sep 2021 - Cheltenham And Gloucester 66 Church Walk Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9AU. Alterations to ground floor elevations and reorganisation of the existing ground floor space. Status Approved
- Reference DM/21/2239 Thu 10 Jun 2021 - Millets 77 Church Walk Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9BQ. Prior approval of a change of use of part of first floor from offices (old Use Class B1a, now Use Class E) to form 2 no. residential apartments. (Use Class C3). Status Approved
- Reference DM/21/1011 Wed 10 Mar 2021 - 66 Church Walk Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9AU. Change of use of first and second floor from B1 Office use to C3 residential use(3 x 1 bedroom flat and 3 x 2 bedroom flat). Status Approved
- Reference DM/19/4077 Mon 23 Dec 2019. 60 - 64 Church Walk Burgess Hill West Sussex RH15 9AS. Change of use of first floor and erection of roof extension to create two additional storeys providing 15 residential (use class C3) apartments. Status Approved

As noted above, this application also demonstrates the planning authority have previously supported the principle of upwards extension to create residential flats over commercial ground floor use on Church Walk.

The proposals have been planned with reference to:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) Planning Practice Guidance and National Design Guide (2019)

The NPPF identifies the National planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that planning applications for development should be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Technical Housing Standards (2015)

Mid Sussex Design Guide Supplementary Design Guide – this document has been important in the development of the proposal as it seeks to encourage high quality new development across Mid Sussex that responds appropriately to its context.

Mid Sussex District Plan (2018): Policies DP1 (Sustainable Economic Development) DP2 (Town Centre Development) DP4 (Housing) DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) DP21 (Transport) DP26 (Character and Design) DP27 (Dwelling Space Standard) DP30 (Housing Mix) and DP39 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

Burgess Hill Neighbourhood Plan identifies the development vision up to 2031, the relevant parts of the Neighbourhood plan to the application site are Policy TC1 The Civic and Cultural Quarter and TC2 The Leisure and Entertainment Quarter

The above documents aim to ensure that any new proposals:

- Contribute positively to the character of Burgess Hill and the identity of the local area of Church Walk.
- Deliver a safe and healthy, aesthetically appropriate high quality scheme which integrates with the existing infrastructure.
- Create a multi-use active street-scene and external environment for shoppers and residents.

Mid Sussex District Council adopted its Site Allocations Development Plan Document in June 2022. This document confirms that development will not be permitted where it would be harmful to local character, but in addition to identifying strategic sites, it also notes that opportunities available to improve the character, functionality and quality of the existing area are not missed. Proposals should contribute towards the local character by respecting the existing building fabric, massing, form, scale and proportion.

4.0 Use

The application is for a mixed use scheme, retaining the commercial ground floor use with partial demolition of the first floor to allow for residential use on the first, second and third floors.

Access to the ground floor commercial space for customers will remain via the main doors on the pedestrianised Church Walk entrance with staff and delivery entrance as existing to the rear via Crescent Way.

Access to the residential units will be via a new residential entrance from the rear of the building via Crescent Way. This will enable a clear separation between the two building uses and user groups of the general public, staff and residents. It will also help to establish a more residential street front along Crescent Way for the existing residential entrances adjacent to the application site.



Above: View of application site (dark brick to left of photo) from Crescent Way showing access to adjacent residential buildings

The residential access will provide access to the main stair and lift core, leading to each unit entrance door.



Above: Extract of proposed Ground floor plan to show separate residential and commercial entrance from Crescent Way.

5.0 Scale

The proposed upwards extension is of a height which is sympathetic to the immediate neighbouring context and of the other buildings along Church Walk. The proposed upwards extension would not exceed that of neighbouring approved schemes.



Above: Front elevation showing context of Church Walk neighbouring buildings and approved applications

The width and length of the proposed building will match the existing building footprint with setback for balconies to first and second floor with a more substantial setback to the front and rear on the third floor.

These setbacks will help to create a more interesting, animated elevation to the front and rear of the application building and add to the exiting Church Walk street scene.

The setbacks for balconies and top floor will also help to bring the Church Walk facing façade back down to a human scale, and help to rectify the existing shear brick wall which is domineering and not in keeping with the existing context.

6.0 Amount

In addition to the ground floor commercial unit which would have a proposed area of 280m², the three floors above would comprise of 6No 2 bedroom and 4No. 1 bedroom apartments. All residential areas are designed to meet national space standards as noted below.

Frist floor:

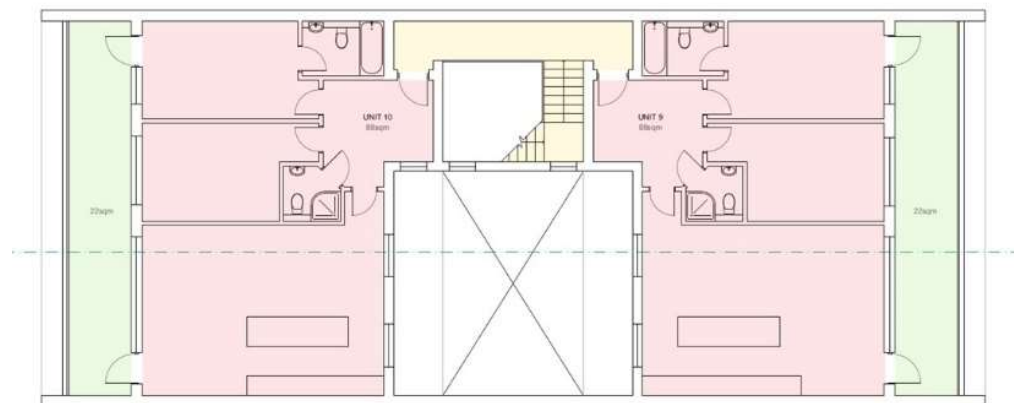
Unit 1 – 1 bed, 2 person - 51m²
Unit 2 – 2 bed, 3 person – 63m²
Unit 3 – 2 bed, 3 person – 63m²
Unit 4 – 1 bed, 2 person – 51m²

Second Floor:

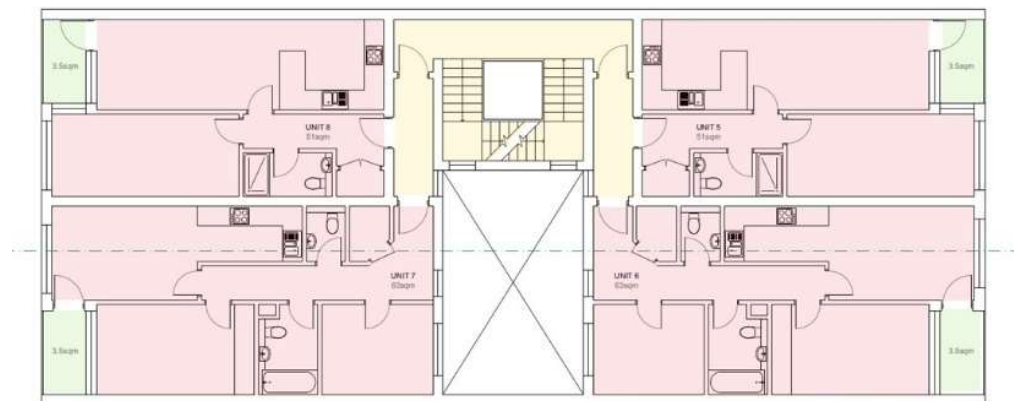
Unit 5 – 1 bed, 2 person - 51m²
Unit 6 – 2 bed, 3 person – 63m²
Unit 7 – 2 bed, 3 person – 63m²
Unit 8 – 1 bed, 2 person – 51m²

Third Floor:

Unit 9 – 2 bed, 4 person – 88m²
Unit 10 – 2 bed, 4 person – 88m²



Proposed Third Floor Plan 1:50



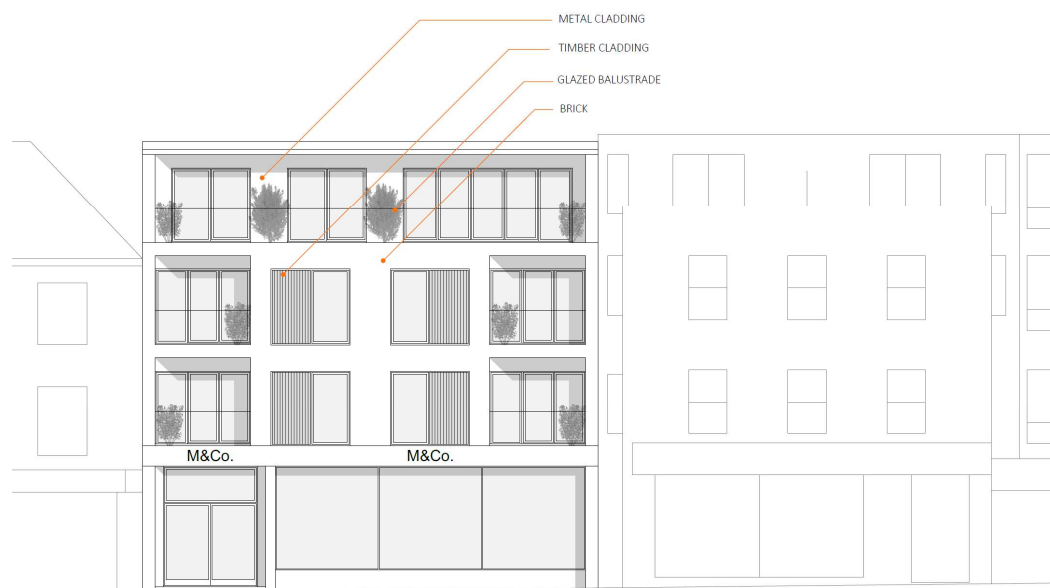
Proposed Second Floor Plan 1:50

Above: Examples of proposed residential layouts

7.0 Appearance

The surrounding context is predominantly brown and red brickwork. The proposed external materials will reflect the existing and neighbouring building through the use of brick and timber cladding with metal cladding to the top floor to reduce the massing further.

The proposed surface materials are appropriate to the area and would be in keeping with the texture, solids and openings of the local context. These decisions have been key in ensuring the design and use are legible and help to demarcate the extents of the commercial and residential parts of the building.



Above: Front elevation with proposed materials identified

The proposed flat roof will reflect the adjacent approved scheme, the existing buildings opposite and numerous building forms along Church Walk.

The proposed setback external spaces at each floor help to create more variety to the façade which reflects the character of the area more closely than the stark brick wall of the existing building. The change in material at this level also reflects the materiality of the neighbouring properties and helps to reduce the perceived mass further.

The lighting and signage at the ground floor on Church Walk are directly linked to the commercial use while the tone, texture and lighting to the residential floors were carefully considered to ensure these are private but provide safe accessible entry from Crescent Way and through the communal spaces within the building.

8.0 Layout

There is clear separation of the public and private areas on site, with commercial ground floor and residential floors above. Entrances are located so there can be no confusion for building users and the design makes it clear when viewed externally where each use is accommodated. The larger scale glazing and entrance doors at ground floor ensure visual separation between the commercial parts of the building and the domestic scale of windows to the residential floors above.

All proposed new residential units benefit from large windows, good natural daylight and outlook for all habitable rooms.

There is provision for outdoor private space with setback balcony/terraced areas to all residential units and they are also located in close proximity to a number of public open spaces such as St John's Park which includes children's play area, skate park and extensive general amenity space, is a couple minutes walk away (0.2 miles).

9.0 Access

Level access to all ground floor entrance doors is provided, with central stair and lift access to all upper floors allowing access to individual flats, allowing all building users of all abilities to move through the building on equal terms.

The layout of the flats is within simple rectangular areas, which would allow for maximum future flexibility to meet the changing needs of residents.

The layout of the residential units will provide good passive surveillance over all internal communal spaces and the nature of the site location means that the external areas are well lit and busy. All entrance doors will incorporate glazing to ensure good visibility and there are no projections or corners to the ground floor elevations which would obscure viewing angles.

This town centre site benefits from excellent public transport links locally with bus stops very close by and the Burgess Hill train station providing access to the Brighton to London mainline. The site is very central and also within walking distance of many public amenities of Burgess Hill.

Due to the reasons stated above, off-street parking is considered unnecessary and would not be possible due to the compact nature of the site, however the scheme does propose good cycle parking provision with secure parking for 15 cycles.

10.0 Sustainability

The impact of the proposals on energy consumption, sustainability and thermal comfort during the winter and summer months have been carefully considered during the design process.

The proposed external materials such as brick and metal cladding will provide a robust external envelope and will age well with minimal maintenance.

High levels of thermal insulation and thermally efficient windows and doors will keep heat loss to a minimum while the dual aspect layout of the residential units will provide good natural ventilation.

Water usage will be reduced through water efficient taps and sanitaryware with the aim of reducing consumption to 110 litres per person, per day.

The scheme will also include energy efficient lighting and proximity sensor lighting to all communal residential areas.

11.0 Conclusion

The proposed mixed-use application represents a high-quality design that aims to improve and preserve the character of Church Walk and the surrounding area.

The principle of development of an upwards extension has been proven as acceptable to neighbouring sites.

The proposals would provide high quality living space while respecting the established grain of the existing street scene and avoiding any unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties.

The site is within the town centre and benefits from numerous options of transport without the need for private vehicles.

The proposed development provides an opportunity to make more efficient use of the existing building and will make a windfall contribution to new housing in Burgess Hill.

The scheme has considered the full site context, including the physical, social and architectural characteristics of the area as well as the relevant planning policies to put forward a scheme which would sit well within the site surroundings.

This document has demonstrated that the density of the proposal is entirely appropriate for the site and the existing services available in this town centre area could support the modest development proposed.

The design and appearance will visually relate to the surrounding buildings and will be an attractive addition to the variety of building along Church Walk.